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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCL #0571 1461445  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 261445Z MAY 06  
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6716  
INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 7603  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 2800  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 1926  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 2176

UNCLAS CASABLANCA 000571

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CACs](#) [ZH](#) [ZT](#) [MO](#)

SUBJECT: Tsunami Destroys Casablanca - Next Thursday

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Out of All the Cities in All the World...  
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¶1. (U) On Monday afternoon, May 22, 2006, hundreds of Moroccan children returned home from school with a dire prediction that a giant tsunami would strike Casablanca in a mere three days. Some schools threatened closures and word of the disaster washed over the city sending people scurrying to find more information and seek higher ground. A few wealthy, educated expats fled their palatial homes by the sea to find refuge in the high-rise dwellings of friends well above the predicted level of destruction. Less fortunate Moroccans, meanwhile, could be found heading to mosques to pray for protection against the storm, images of Indian Ocean tsunami still fresh in their minds. Moroccan National Press reported some Moroccans were packed and ready to head to the mountains or even travel to other countries. Consulate Casablanca's Consular Section received numerous emails and phone calls requesting information on the impending doom as well.

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He Had to Blog Into Mine...  
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¶2. (U) The tsunami prediction originated with French author and UFO "kidnapping victim" Eric Julien, director of the Ufological Research Center. Julien claimed he had received information psychically that a comet fragment would crash into the Atlantic Ocean on May 25, 2006, and cause a giant tsunami. He asserted that the waves would be up to 200

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meters high and impact all countries bordering the Atlantic. In Morocco, Julien's forecast was taken so seriously that the head of the Moroccan Meteorological office, Mustapha Janah made an official statement to the Moroccan press denying the possibility of the tsunami and quoting "NASA" officials who noted that the comet in question would be approximately ten million kilometers away when it passed the earth.

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Maybe not Today, Maybe not Tomorrow...  
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¶3. (U) Why did the rumor spread so quickly and why was it taken so seriously? According to some Moroccans, the answer may be twofold. First, Morocco is a land of oral history where word of mouth has been the preferred method of communicating news for generations. With literacy rates hovering around fifty percent, gossip is a more common method of disseminating information than the newspapers. Second, for the very religious of Casablanca the idea that a giant wave would sweep through the city and wash it "clean

of evil and vice" is not such a stretch of the imagination. Historically, images of floods sweeping away the sinners of the world have peppered religious doctrine and some here believe Casablanca may be overdue for a cleansing.

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Here's Lookin' at You Casa...  
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14. (U) We can confirm nearly twenty-four hours after the predicted tidal wave, Casablanca has been left unscathed. Despite a few nervous moments during the week when the sky darkened and the surf increased slightly, Casablanca remains intact.

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